



CONNECTICUT BUSINESS & INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

TESTIMONY
BEFORE THE
COMMERCE COMMITTEE
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
February 15, 2011

Good afternoon Senator LeBeau, Representative Berger, and members of the Commerce Committee. My name is Louis Bach and I'm testifying on behalf of the Connecticut Business and Industry Association. CBIA is Connecticut's oldest and largest trade association with approximately 10,000 members across the state. A vast majority of our members are small businesses, employing 50 or fewer employees.

People seeking to establish, operate, or grow businesses in Connecticut must interact with the state to do so. There are permit and license requirements, registration requirements, mandatory information disclosures, tax liabilities, and the like. Additionally, businesses often pursue available resources like incentive programs on a voluntary basis. Unfortunately businesses often find navigating their way through the state bureaucracy very difficult; they need a more efficient and user friendly way of interacting with the state in order to grow or locate here.

CBIA supports the idea of a single portal through which prospective and existing businesses may pass when seeking assistance with state regulations and licensing, economic development and tax incentive programs, and other business issues. For this reason we support a number of measures being discussed today, specifically:

- **S.B. No. 901** AAC THE APPOINTMENT OF A MUNICIPAL OMBUDSMEN WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT;
- **S.B. No. 902** AA STREAMLINING AND CREATING A MORE EFFICIENT AND BUSINESS-FRIENDLY REGISTRATION PROCESS;
- **H.B. No. 6288** AAC THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND STATE SERVICES FOR SMALL BUSINESSES; and
- **H.B. No. 6316** AAC A SINGLE POINT OF ENTRY FOR BUSINESSES AT THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF THE STATE.

It is our view, in order to best serve the state's current and prospective businesses, that the aforementioned measures be combined to form a single holistic piece of legislation. The various state agencies that make up our government are like the work stations in a manufacturing facility; insiders understand how all the pieces come together whereas an outside observer might be perplexed. Customers in need

of a finished widget do not stroll the factory floor from station to station in search of “the next step,” it isn’t easy or efficient. People shopping for a state in which to do business to are no different. Moreover, because many of the hurdles faced by prospective start-up businesses – like regulatory compliance or tax status – evolve as a business matures, we would further recommend that existing businesses be considered among the targeted beneficiaries of a consolidated state business concierge.

A number of states have adopted the concierge model. Notable among them is the State of Oregon. The Oregon Business Development Department recently reorganized and streamlined its business services. Designed from the ground up as a one-stop-shop for start-ups and extant entities, “Business Oregon” is now entering its second full year of shepherding private employers through the “wide range of competitive issues including accessing capital, locating industrial property, developing an export strategy, identifying business incentives, connecting with R&D resources, and more” in order to “to create, retain, expand and attract businesses that provide sustainable, living-wage jobs for Oregonians.”¹ Helping companies efficiently navigate the bureaucracy of doing business allows those companies to spend more time doing what they do best: creating new value and jobs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today; I would be happy to answer any questions that I can.

¹ www.oregon4biz.com